

*Mr. Reid.*

7th August, 1872.

do not object to any water races. In fact, they suggest that power should be taken in the Bill to carry these races through pastoral country, without compensation.

82. Allusion having been made to the price realized by this block, Mr. Reid said that superior land, adjoining schools, roads, and markets, had been open for the last six years, and was now open, at 10s. per acre.

83. *The Chairman.*] Where?—The Waikouaiti, Blueskin, Hawksbury, Moeraki, Otepopo, Oamaru, Dunedin, East Taieri, West Taieri, Waihola, North Tokomairiro, South Tokomairiro, Waitahuna, Pomahaka, Popotunoa, Wairiki, East Clutha, and West Clutha Hundreds, have been open for sale for the last six years.

84. *The Chairman.*] How far is the nearest of these lands situated from Roxburgh?—I can't say.

85. In reply to a remark made by the Chairman regarding Mr. Clarke's purchase, the witness said that he believed the land was run up in price for the purpose of "salting" it on Mr. Clarke.

86. In reply to Mr. Studholme, the witness said that, in the matter of survey, a considerable saving was effected by selling in large blocks. The survey price of small blocks was always more costly than that of large blocks.

87. *Mr. Studholme.*] Do you think the land in question would have sold to better advantage in small blocks?—No; I do not think it would have sold at all in small blocks. I will illustrate that opinion by the case of a block of very superior land opened upon the gold fields, and which we were told would sell at a very high price, yet when the land was offered for sale not an acre was purchased. There was no competition.

88. *The Chairman.*] What land was that?—A block opened on White's run, in the Wakatipu district.

89. Have there been no applications for that?—It was advertised for six weeks, and the last information I had on the subject, no application had been made to purchase.

90. Who recommended that land for sale?—The representatives of the district in the Council. Mr. Robertson was one, and there were others. I attribute the absence of applications to purchase partly to the fact that residents on the gold fields object to the system of selling. They prefer taking up land under the Lease Regulations.

91. *Mr. J. C. Brown.*] Are you aware that there has been a demand for land in this neighbourhood?—I am aware that a desire has existed that land should be opened in this district for agricultural leases, under the 16th section of the Gold Fields Act, and have endeavoured, so far as the present law will permit, to meet that demand.

92. No land has been thrown open for lease for the last ten years to my knowledge.—I think there must be some mistake: There is the Moa Flat Block, the Island Block, what is known as the Shingle Block, and also the block on Miller and Henderson's run.

93. Is Cargill and Anderson's Block not equally good for settlement to any other blocks that have been thrown open?—No; I would not say that it was equally good for settlement. I would not say that it was fit for settlement at all. I take the report of the Surveyor, upon whose judgment I have every reliance.

94. What acreage of blocks have been opened for settlement in that district?—Some 7,000 or 8,000 acres; I think about that, but really I do not like to give evidence on this point; it is a matter of fact which can be ascertained.

95. How many acres have been taken up, to the best of your knowledge?—About 3,000 or 4,000 acres. I cannot say positively, but shall be happy to obtain information for the Committee, if desired.

96. How long has Block 3 been surveyed and thrown open?—Probably between eight and twelve months.

97. Is it open for settlement?—No; not quite. There is a case pending in the Supreme Court about it. Some questions arose regarding the power of the Government to cancel leases over these blocks, and it was agreed that the decision of the Judge on one should rule all the others.

98. *The Chairman.*] How long has the case been pending?—For upwards of twelve months.

99. *The Chairman.*] Is it not nearer two years?—The leases were cancelled about January, 1871. It was first taken up by Mr. McLean, and we were threatened by Messrs. Cargill and Anderson's solicitors with an injunction, unless we agreed to stand by the decision of the Court in that case.

100. *Mr. Brown.*] So this land has been prevented from being settled upon through the action taken by Cargill and Anderson?—Yes.

101. What is the extent of this block?—2,500 acres.

102. In reply to other questions put by Mr. Brown, the witness said that one corner of this block is immediately adjoining that of the 20,000-acre block.

103. Is the 2,500-acre block suitable for agricultural purposes?—It has been taken for these purposes.

104. Is the Shingle Block fit for agricultural purposes?—I do not know of my own knowledge; I have heard it described as being too dry.

105. What is the extent of that block?—I think 2,500 acres.

106. *The Chairman.*] What rental do Cargill and Anderson pay for their 64,000 acres?—For 1870–71 the assessment amounted to £727 6s.

107. Does that represent any portion of the frontage to the river?—The frontage to the river is reserved.

108. How much compensation did you agree to pay Cargill and Anderson for suspension of their lease?—Two shillings per acre.

109. How much for survey?—The amount provided for by the Waste Lands Act; that is, 10 per cent., in land. The amount depends upon the value of the land.

110. What was the selling price?—It sold at 20s. per acre.

111. What was the cost paid for Clark's survey?—I do not know.

112. Is it not a fact that it cost 7d. per acre?—It may be.

113. Do you say that the people on the gold fields object to purchase, and prefer taking up land under the Gold Fields Lease Regulations of 1866?—Yes; I say that they prefer taking up land on lease. They do not seem to desire to purchase in the first instance.